

THE LYRE BIRD.

In the year 1802 Lieutenant Collins, of the Royal Marines, published *An Account of the English Colony of New South Wales, from its Settlement in January, 1788, to August, 1801*, by which it appears that early in the year 1798, the Governor fitted out a journey of discovery into the interior, under the following curious circumstances. Certain turbulent Irishmen having determined to seek out a settlement for themselves, the governor tried to check their roving propensities by corporal punishment, but this not proving effectual, he resolved to convince them, by their own experience, of the danger and difficulty of a wandering life. Accordingly he ordered four of the hardiest of these Irish to be chosen, and properly fitted out for a journey of discovery. They were to be accompanied by three trusty men, upon whom the governor knew he could

rely; and these guides were to lead the Irish back, when fatigued and exhausted with their journey, over the most difficult and dangerous part of the country. Before setting out, a conspiracy to murder the guides was discovered; four soldiers were therefore added to the party, and on the 14th January they set out from Paramatta. On the 24th the soldiers returned with three of the Irish, who having gained the foot of the first mountains, were so completely tired with the journey, and apprehensive of the prospect before them, that they requested to be allowed to return with the soldiers. The rest of the party returned on the 9th February. They appear to have travelled about one hundred and forty miles in a south-west direction from Paramatta.

They brought in with them (says Lieutenant Collins) one of the birds which they had named pheasants, but

which, on examination, appeared to be a variety of the Bird of Paradise. The size of this curious and handsome bird was that of a common hen; the colour a reddish black, the bill long, the legs black and very strong. The tail, about two feet in length, was formed of several feathers, two of which were the principal, having the interior sides scalloped alternately of a deeper or lighter reddish brown, inclining to orange, shading gently into a white or silver colour next the stem, crossing each other, and, at the very extremity, terminating in a broad black round finishing. The difference of colour in the scallops, did not proceed from any precise change in the colour itself, but from the texture of the feather, which was alternately thicker and thinner. The fibres of the outer side of the stem were narrow and of a lead colour. Two other feathers of equal length, and of a bluish or lead colour, lay within those; very narrow, and having fibres only on one side of the stem. Many other feathers of the same length lay within those again, which were of a pale greyish colour, and of the most delicate texture, resembling more the skeleton of a feather than a perfect one.

Such is the first discovery and description of the Lyre bird. The figure given by Lieutenant Collins "from the pencil of a capital artist," conveys but a faint idea of this extraordinary animal; but it has been the only type to our naturalists, until a more elegant and correct one was given in the magnificent work of Mr. Gould on the birds of Australia, and from which, by permission, our cut is taken. From this the reader will be able to form some idea of the magnificence and peculiar structure of the beautiful tail of the male bird, which imitates the form of an ancient Grecian lyre. Mr. Gould says that were he requested to suggest an emblem for Australia among its birds, he would select the *Menura*, or Lyre Bird, as the most appropriate, being not only strictly peculiar to Australia, but, as far as is yet known, to the colony of New South Wales.

Although according to the habit which most colonists have of naming the new birds of the colony after the well-known birds of the mother country, this bird has been called a *pheasant*, yet scarcely any two writers on ornithology agree as to its proper situation in the natural system. In Cuvier's arrangement it belongs to the *dentirostral*, i.e., *tooth-billed*, family of the great order *PASSERES**, with which it agrees in the bill being notched, and also in the general form of the legs and feet. Others refer it to the *gallinaceous†* birds; while others imagine that it stands alone, being the only one of the genus, and even of the family, as well as only a single species. Mr. Gould thinks it has no relationship to the *gallinaceous* birds, but that it forms a family of the *Insessores*, or *Perchers*. Notwithstanding its great size and the extraordinary form of its tail, in almost every other point it presents a striking resemblance to its minute congeners. Like them it possesses the bristles at the base of the bill, but to a less extent, the same unusual mass of loose, flowing hair-like feathers on the back and at the tail, the same extraordinary power of running, and the like feebleness of flight. Its immense claws and feet adapt it admirably for the peculiar localities it is destined to inhabit: it passes with ease over the loose stones and the sides of rocky gulleys and ravines.

The range of this bird does not seem to extend so far to the east of New South Wales as Moreton bay; nor west of Port Philip on the southern coast. This, however, is doubtful. It inhabits equally the brushes on the coast, and those that clothe the sides of the mountains in the interior. On the coast it is especially abundant at Western Port and Illawarra, and probably extends over a great portion of the unexplored intervening country. In the interior it is a denizen of the cedar brushes of the Liverpool range of mountains, of the Tumut country. The bird is exceedingly shy in its

habits, so that the naturalist has the greatest difficulty in observing it:

While among the brushes (says Mr. Gould) I have been surrounded by these birds, pouring forth their loud and liquid calls, for days together, without being able to get a sight of them; and it was only by the most determined perseverance, and extreme caution, that I was enabled to effect this desirable object; which was rendered the more difficult by their often frequenting the most inaccessible and precipitous sides of gulleys and ravines, covered with tangled masses of creepers and umbrageous trees: the cracking of a stick, the rolling down of a small stone, or any other noise, however slight, is sufficient to alarm it; and none but those who have traversed these rugged, hot, and suffocating brushes can fully understand the excessive labour attendant on the pursuit of the *Menura*. Independently of climbing over rocks and falling trunks of trees, the sportsman has to creep and crawl beneath and among the branches with the utmost caution, taking care only to advance when the bird's attention is occupied in singing, or in scratching up the leaves in search of food. To watch its actions it is necessary to remain perfectly motionless, not venturing to move even in the slightest degree, or it vanishes from sight as if by magic.

But although thus cautious, it is not always so alert. In some of the more accessible brushes through which roads have been cut, it may frequently be seen, and even on horse-back closely approached, the bird apparently showing less fear of a horse than of man. At Illawarra the bird is sometimes successfully pursued by dogs trained to rush suddenly upon it, when it immediately leaps upon the branch of a tree, and, its attention being attracted by the dog which stands barking below, it is easily approached and shot. Another successful mode of capturing the bird is by wearing a tail of a full plumaged male in the hat, keeping it constantly in motion, and concealing the person among the bushes, when the attention of the bird being arrested by the apparent intrusion of another of its own sex, it will be attracted within the range of the gun. If the bird be hid from view by surrounding objects, any unusual sound, such as a shrill whistle, will generally induce him to show himself for an instant, by causing him to leap with a gay and sprightly air upon some neighbouring branch to ascertain the cause of the disturbance. Advantage must be taken of this circumstance immediately, or the next moment it may be half way down the gully. So totally different, says Mr. Gould, is the shooting of this bird to any thing practised in Europe, that the most expert shot would have but little chance until well experienced in the peculiar nature of the country, and the habits of the bird. The *Menura* seldom, if ever, attempts to escape by flight, but easily eludes pursuit by its extraordinary powers of running. None are so ready at taking the bird as the naked black, whose noiseless and gliding steps enable him to steal upon it unheard and unseen: with a gun in his hand he rarely allows it to escape, and he will often kill it even with his own rude weapons.

But all this shyness may have been produced by persecution. The savage attracted by the beauty of the tail plumage, has eagerly sought it, in order to deck his greasy locks therewith. Among the civilized, curiosity hunters sought the feathery lyre with avidity; the two principal tail feathers were sold in the shops at Sydney, formerly at a cheap rate, as the birds were numerous in the mountain ranges of the Illawarra district; but now that the bird, from its frequent destruction, has become rare, these tail feathers have attained a price of from twenty to thirty shillings the pair.

It is much to be regretted (says Mr. Bennett) that human beings are so eager to destroy, even to extermination, the races of animals, useful or dangerous, which may be found in a new country. In the settled parts of the colony, the harmless kangaroos and emus are rarely seen, when they might easily be domesticated about the habitations. The same remark applies to the Lyre Pheasant. Why are they

* Literally SPARROWS, but containing such birds as the Thrush, Swallow, Lark, Crow, and Wren.

† Cuvier's Order GALLINE contains poultry, and birds resembling poultry, such as the Peacock, Pheasant, Grouse, and Pigeon.

not domesticated before, by extermination, they are lost to us for ever?

The Lyre-bird is of a wandering disposition, and though it probably keeps to the same brush, is constantly engaged in traversing it from one end to the other, from the mountain top to the bottom of the gulleys, whose steep and irregular sides present no obstacles to its long legs and powerful muscular thighs. It can also take extraordinary leaps; rising at one leap, it is said, as much as ten feet in a perpendicular direction from the ground. It seldom takes wing, but is fond of traversing trunks of fallen trees, and frequently attains a considerable height by leaping from branch to branch. Its habits are said to be solitary; but Mr. Gould once saw two males at play; they were chasing each other round and round with extraordinary rapidity, pausing every now and then to utter their loud shrill calls: while thus occupied they carried their tails horizontally, as they always do when moving quickly through the brush: that being the only position in which this large organ could be conveniently borne at such times. One of its curious habits is similar to that of the gallinaceæ, viz., that of forming small round hillocks, which are constantly visited by day, and on which the male is continually trampling, at the same time erecting and spreading out his tail in the most graceful manner, and uttering his various cries, pouring forth his natural notes, or mocking those of other birds, and even imitating the howling of the native dog, or dingo. In addition to its loud full call, which may be heard reverberating over the gulleys at a considerable distance, it has an inward and varied song, the lower notes of which, says Mr. Gould, can only be heard within a few yards of the bird. This animated strain is frequently broken off abruptly, and again resumed with a low inward snapping noise, ending with an imitation of the loud and full note of the satin-bird, and always accompanied with a tremulous motion of the tail.

The early morning and evening are the periods when this bird is most animated and active. Its feeding time is early in the morning, when the male struts about with the air of a dunghill cock. Its food consists chiefly of insects; it is particularly fond of centipedes: Mr. Gould has found the remains of shelled snails in the gizzard, which is very strong and muscular.

The general plumage is brown, and not remarkable; the beauty of the bird lies in the plumage of its tail, the new feathers of which appear in February or March, but do not attain their full perfection till June; during this, and the four succeeding months, it is in its finest state, after which the feathers are gradually shed.

Little is known respecting the nests of these birds, the numbers of their broods, or the time of breeding. Their nests are said to be placed on the ledge of a projecting rock at the base of a tree, or on the top of a stump, but always near the ground. The natives (who call the bird "Béleck-béleck" and "Balangara") state that the number of the eggs is two; that they are of a light colour freckled with red spots. A nest observed by Mr. Gould was placed on a prominent point of a rock, in a situation quite secure from observation from behind, but affording the bird a commanding view and easy retreat in front. This nest was deep and basin-shaped, and had the appearance of having been roofed. It was of large size, formed outwardly of sticks, and lined inwardly with the inner bark of trees and fibrous roots. The above details do not quite agree with Mr. Bennett's account. He says that these birds build in old hollow trunks of trees, which are lying upon the ground, or in the holes of rocks; that the nest is formed merely of dried grass or leaves scraped together; that the female lays from twelve to sixteen eggs of a white colour speckled with a few light blue spots; and that the young are difficult to catch, as they run about with rapidity, concealing themselves among the rocks and bushes.

THE PROPORTION OF HAPPINESS TO VIRTUE.

Now this I readily submit to as a great truth, that the degrees of happiness vary according to the degrees of virtue, and consequently, that that life which is most virtuous is most happy, with reference to those that are vicious or less virtuous; every degree of virtue having a proportionate degree of happiness accompanying it. But I do not think the most virtuous life so the most happy, but that it may become happier, unless something more be comprehended in the word *virtue*, than the Stoics, Peripatetics, and the generality of other moralists, understand by it. For with them it signifies no more but only such a habitude of the will to good, whereby we are constantly disposed, notwithstanding the contrary tendency of our passions, to reform the necessary offices of life. This they call moral or civil virtue, and although this brings with it enough of happiness to make amends for the difficulties which attend the practice of it, yet I am not of opinion that the greatest happiness attainable by man in this life consists in it.

But there is another and a higher sense of the word, namely, contemplation, and the unitive way of religion. This is called divine virtue. I allow of the distinction, but I would not be thought to derive it from the principle as if moral virtue were acquired, and this infused, (for to speak ingenuously, infused virtue seemed ever to me as great a paradox in divinity, as occult qualities in philosophy,) but from the nobleness of the object; the object of the former being moral good, and the object of the latter God himself. The former is a state of proficiency, the latter of perfection. The former is a state of difficulty and contention, the latter of ease and sincerity. The former is employed in mastering the passions, and regulating the actions of common life, the latter in divine meditation, and the ecstasies of seraphic love. He that has only the former is like Moses, with much difficulty climbing up the holy mount; but he that has the latter, is like the same person conversing with God on the serene top of it, and shining with the rays of anticipated glory. So that this latter supposes the acquisition of the former, and consequently has all the happiness pertaining to the other, besides what it adds of its own. This is the last stage of human perfection, the utmost round of the ladder whereby we ascend to heaven; one step higher is glory. Here then will I build my tabernacle, for it is good to be here.—NORRIS.

AN AFFECTED MAN.

AN affected man is an extraordinary man in ordinary things; one that would go a strain beyond himself and is taken in it. A man that overdoes all things with great solemnity of circumstance; and whereas with more negligence he might pass better, makes himself, with a great deal of endeavour, ridiculous. The fancy of some odd quaintness has put him clear beside his nature; he cannot be that he would, and hath lost what he was. He is out point-blank in every trifle, as if his credit and opinion hung upon it; the very space of his arms in an embrace is studied before, and premeditated; and the figure of his countenance of a fortnight's contriving. He will not curse without book, and extempore, but in some choice way, and perhaps as some great man curses. Every action of his cries, *Do ye mark me?* and men do mark him, how absurd he is. For affectation is the most betraying humour, and nothing puzzles a man less to find out than this. All the actions of his life are like so many things hedged in without any natural cadence, or natural connexion at all; you shall track him all through like a schoolboy's theme, one piece from one, and this from another, and join all in this general, that they are none of his own; you shall observe his mouth not made for that tone, nor his face for that simper. And it is his luck that his finest things most misbecome him. If he affect the gentleman, as the humour most commonly lies that way, not the least *punctilio* of a fine man but he is strict in to a hair, even to their very negligences, which he cons as rules. He will not carry a knife with him to wound reputation, and pay double a reckoning rather than ignobly question it. As he is full of this *ignobly* and *nobly* and *genteelly*, this mere fear to trespass against the genteel way puts him out most of all. It is a humour runs through many things besides, but is an ill-favoured ostentation in all, and thrives not. And the best use of such men is, they are good parts in a play.—

BISHOP EARL.

PLANT-LIKE ANIMALS.

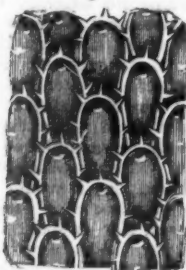
IV.

CONTINUING our notice of some of the simplest forms of zoophytes we must mention a family which, like the corallines proper, exhibits more or less of a horny substance in its structure; and also varies considerably in shape, according to the different species. Sometimes it takes the form here represented, (fig. 1,) and looks not unlike a marine plant.

Fig. 1.

*Flustra foliacea.*

Fig. 2.

*Flustra foliacea. Cells highly magnified.*

When examined with the microscope this polypus is seen to present a great number of small cells, like the combs of bees. In some of the species only one side of the stems and leaves is covered with these cells, while in others they are found on both sides.

The formation of these cells, which frequently consist of a congeries of many thousands, invariably commences with one only. The original cell is scarcely completed, before another cell begins to shoot out from it like a bud, and this is gradually enlarged and developed until it attains the size of the primary one. Round the margin of the Flustra, cells may be observed in every stage of growth, some just budding, others half formed, and others again nearly complete. In this way the progress and duration of the whole polypus may be carried on, as it would seem, without any natural limit.

The original polype and its immediate successors may grow old, languish, and die; but the solid cells remain in their connection as a root or fixture.

Here again we see another reason for calling these singular creatures "plant-like animals," for the enduring cells may aptly be compared to the trunk and branches of a tree, while the constantly renewing exterior may represent the annual shoots and foliage.

We noticed in our last paper on zoophytes, the vast number of *cilia*, or minute hairs, with which the feelers of some polypi are furnished. This is very remarkable in the species we are now considering, and the rapidity of motion in these *cilia* is not less wonderful than their number. Dr. Roget says,

The vibrations of these *cilia* are far too rapid to be followed by the quickest eye, even when assisted by the most powerful microscope, and can be detected only at the times when they have become comparatively languid, by the diminished vigour of the animal: their motions may then be seen, ascending on one side of the tentaculum, and descending on the other. All the *cilia* appear to commence and to cease their motions at the same moment. The constancy with which they continue would seem to exclude the possibility of their being the result of volition; and they are, therefore, probably determined by some unknown physical cause, dependent on the life of the animal. But so retentive are they of the power of motion, whatever may be its cause, that if any one of the tentacula be cut off, its *cilia* will continue to vibrate, and will propel it forward in the fluid for a considerable time, as if it had become itself an individual animal.

To the same class and order as the *Flustra* belongs the family of polypi named *Millepora*, (fig. 3,) having the stony substance of which the axis is composed in

various forms, with the surface hollowed out into small pores, or holes, though sometimes it occurs without any apparent holes.

Fig. 3.

*Millepora calcarea.*

Fig. 4.

A portion of *Millepora calcarea*. (highly magnified.)

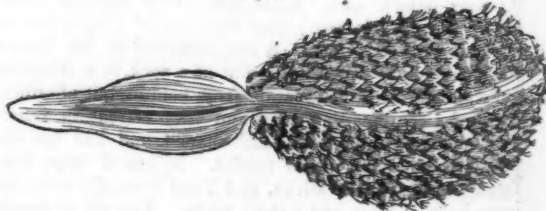
When the pores are not apparent, the species is called *Nullipora*. When magnified, the pores of the species above represented, have a very beautiful appearance, as may be seen at fig. 4.

Another very singular form of zoophyte is that to which zoologists have given the name of *Pennatula*, or *Sea-pen*, because the shape of the most common species bears some resemblance to a quill. A common stem of a hard calcareous nature on the outside has a certain number

of branches, disposed in a double row on one portion of it, much in the same way as the vane of a quill. In the Supplement to Cuvier's List of Polypi, we find the pennatula described as truly a composite animal, or one in which the numerous little animals form part of a common, living, contractile body, which is the medium of locomotion and nutrition to all the individuals, so that they are all carried together by the sole movements of the common part, and also nourished by means of this common portion of which they form a part.

Immense numbers of the pennatulæ are met with in different parts of the ocean, and are always floating. They do not appear to possess the power of directing themselves in any determinate track, but are carried about by currents, and are apparently as destitute of voluntary motion as the gulf weed itself. It is not established, though repeatedly asserted, that these animals can swim through the water by their own spontaneous efforts, or have any means of communicating a simultaneous impulse either to the lateral branches, or to the tentaculæ. The mode of growth and of reproduction in these animals is somewhat difficult to imagine, and in fact so little is known of the habits of the pennatulæ that several difficult points of physiology have yet to be determined respecting them.

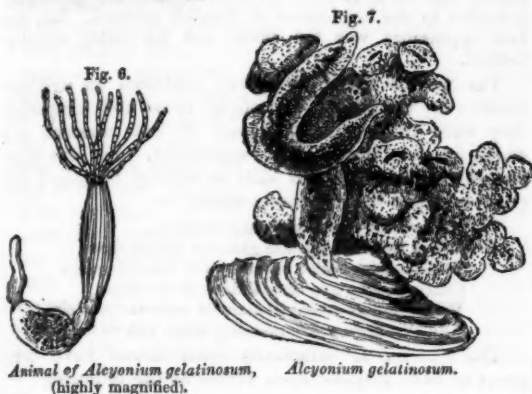
Fig. 5.

*Pennatula phosphorea*, (magnified).

While noticing the difficulties which obstruct a full understanding of the polypi, we may remark that these animals appear to be unprovided with any respiratory organs, although we must conclude that they have the same necessity of breathing as all other living beings. No channels have been discovered for conveying aerated water to the interior of these bodies; but it is considered probable that while the interior surface of the animal is digesting food, the exterior may perform the office of

respiration. Neither have any traces of organs, bearing the least resemblance to a nervous system, been discovered in the polypi.

With a structure somewhat resembling that of the pennatulæ, the next family of polypi we shall notice consists of a gelatinous substance traversed by several canals, surrounded by fibrous membranes. The bark is harder, and hollowed out into small cells, into which the animals retire more or less completely. Fig. 6 gives a magnified representation of one of the animals. Fig. 7 shows the irregular gelatinous mass, which, in the mystery that envelopes these animals, we scarcely know whether to designate the dwelling-place, or the bodily structure of the polypi.

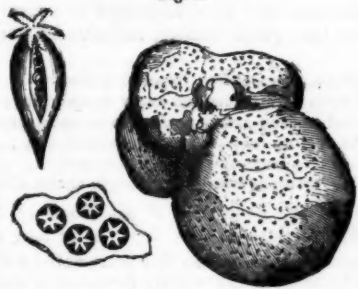


Animal of *Alcyonium gelatinosum*,
(highly magnified).

Alcyonium gelatinosum.

Sometimes the polypi take the form of vegetables, and exhibit what may be called trunks and branches; sometimes they more nearly resemble tubers or fruit. Of the latter description is the species represented at fig. 8.

Fig. 8.



Alcyonium ficus, and Animal.

In selecting a few out of the vast variety of forms which present themselves in this wonderful department of the animal world, we cannot help being struck with the infinite power, and boundless invention displayed in the minute as well as in the grander workings of the Author of Nature.

The inventions of man (says a celebrated writer) appear numerous to an uninformed and superficial judgment; but their limitation is, in reality, very narrow; he displays very little resource in the means of compassing his ends. He modifies or combines the mechanical or other principles, and the materials which the Creator has appointed; but he cannot strike out a new path for himself, as he never invented a principle. Every one of these has been already applied; he can only borrow; while, when he imagines that he has discovered a novelty of his own, he will find that nature had anticipated him, presuming him to forget that he could possess nothing but what he received from his Creator. We should be ready to correct the bee, should it say that it had invented its own geometric rule; but we forget that whether He communicates His knowledge through what we are pleased to term instinct, or through the more laborious road of observation and reasoning, it is equally His gift.

STATE OF EDUCATION AND OF MORALS IN ICELAND.

In the island of Iceland there is no such thing to be found as a man or woman—not decidedly deficient in mental capacity—who cannot read and write well, while the greater part of all classes of the inhabitants have mastered several of the higher branches of education, including a knowledge of modern languages, and an acquaintance with classical literature.

Placed on the verge of the arctic circle, the Icelanders are subjected to the hardships of a long and rigorous winter, during which there are but few hours of the day in which it is possible for them to pursue out-door occupations. These apparently unfavourable circumstances they have with the highest degree of wisdom rendered productive of the choicest of human blessings—the enlightenment of their minds and the raising of their moral characters. Some part of the long evening is employed in teaching the children of the family; and so universal is this practice, that in the whole island there is but one school, which is exclusively used for the highest branches of professional education. After this part of the family duty has been performed, the whole household is assembled—servants and all—and some book is read aloud, each person present taking his turn in reading. After this there usually follows a discussion relating to what has been read, and in which all unreservedly join, and the evening is not suffered to close without engaging in religious exercises.

Every account of these people that has been published agrees in describing them as gentle and peaceable in their dispositions, sober, moral, and religious in their habits. Crimes among them are hardly known. The house of correction at Reikiavich, the capital of the island, after having stood empty for many years, was at length converted into a residence for the governor, by whom it has since been occupied. The island is subject to the penal code of Denmark, which awards the penalty of death to murder and some other heinous offences. It is said that only three or four capital convictions have occurred during the last two centuries; the last of these happened some years before the visit of Sir G. Mackenzie and Dr. Holland, in 1810; it was of a peasant for the murder of his wife, and on that occasion it was not possible to find any one on the island who could be induced to perform the office of executioner, so that it became necessary to send the man to Norway, that the sentence might be carried into effect. It is worthy of remark, that from the first settlement of the island by a Norwegian colony in the ninth century, to the acknowledgment of the King of Norway, and during the six centuries which have since elapsed, no armed force has ever been raised on or introduced into the island.—*PORTER'S Progress of the Nation.*

FORGIVENESS, THE SIGN OF A LOFTY SOUL.

THE brave only know how to forgive; it is the most refined and generous pitch of virtue human nature can arrive at. Cowards have done good and kind actions; cowards have even fought, nay, sometimes even conquered, but a coward never forgave, it is not in his nature; the power of doing it flows only from a strength and greatness of soul, conscious of its own force and security, and above the little temptations of resenting every fruitless attempt to interrupt its happiness.—*STERNE.*

WHEN we pray for any virtue, we should cultivate the virtue as well as pray for it; the form of your prayers should be the rule of your life; every petition to God is a precept to man. Look not, therefore, upon your prayers as a short method of Duty and Salvation only, but as a perpetual monition of duty: by what we require of God we see what He requires of us; and if you want a system or collective body of holy precepts, you need no more but your Prayer Books.—*JEREMY TAYLOR.*

ON THE ART OF WRITING.

III.

THE WRITING-MASTERS OF THE OLDEN TIME.

IN a letter preserved in the Harleian MSS. from James the First to the young Prince Henry, some remarks are made on the neatness and fairness of his hand-writing. The king, suspecting that the tutor had assisted in the composition of the prince's letter, and that his writing-master, Mr. Peter Bales, had touched up the characters, says, "I confess I long to receive a letter from you that may be wholly yours, as well matter as form; as well formed by your mind as drawn by your fingers; for ye may remember, that in my book to you I warn you to be ware with that kind of wit that may fly out at the end of your fingers; not that I commend not a fair hand-writing; *sed hoc facito, illud non omitto*; and the other is *multo magi præcipuum*."

That the young prince succeeded in realizing his father's wishes appears evident from an anecdote related of Henry the Fourth of France, who on receiving a letter from the prince immediately opened it, a custom not usual with him, and admiring the neat elegance of the writing, compared it with the signature to decide whether it were of one hand, and remarked to Sir George Carew, "I see that in writing fair, as in other things, the elder must yield to the younger."

Whether the art of writing is entitled to rank among the *fine* or the *useful* arts is a question which led to many an angry discussion between the writing-masters and the artists of the olden time. In our own day, writing is regarded as an eminently useful art, and its professors receive that respect which belongs to those who follow useful callings. Fine writing is not much regarded now. A good legible hand is the acquisition expected of every person who has received a tolerable education; this being sufficient for the general business of life. It is therefore with some surprise that we read the history of the writing-masters of the olden time, and witness the bombastic strain of egotism with which they were accustomed to announce their art. "It will surprise some, (says Mr. D'Israeli,) when they learn that the artists in verse and colours, poets and painters, have not raised loftier pretensions to the admiration of mankind. Writing-masters, or calligraphers, have had their engraved 'effigies,' with a Fame in flourishes, a pen in one hand, and a trumpet in the other; and fine verses inscribed, and their very lives written!"

It may be amusing as well as useful to point out a few of the characteristics of the old writing-masters as portrayed by themselves and their admirers; for we shall find that when the professors of an art, however useful, become too lofty in their pretensions, they usually earn the ridicule and not the admiration of mankind. The fallacy of the old writing-masters was this: they made the *forms* of the characters which are conventionally used to express our ideas, of more importance than the ideas themselves;—they lingered with fond admiration over the "pencilled knots and flourishes," "the tender shapes and liveliness of the sprigged letters," without regarding the ideas which those letters were intended to express.

Nor were the old writing-masters content to rank as artists merely; they also aspired to be poets. Their poetical aspirations were accounted for by Mr. Oldys, from their being so conversant with the poets by transcribing their moral sentences, short maxims and disticha, to set their scholars as copies; which is certainly laudable to season their youthful *minds* with elegant admonitions, at the same time that they are forming their *hands* to business. Besides, the precepts of any art are well known to be most successfully communicated in verse.

Of the poetry and the rules of the art, as expressed by Mr. Peter Bales, we must leave the reader to form his own opinion.

HOW TO WRITE FAIR.

To write very fair, your pen let be new,
Dish, dash, long-taile flie; false writing eschew;
Neatly and cleanly your hand for to frame,
Strong-stalked pen use, best of a raven;
And comely to write, and give a good grace,
Leave between each word small a letter's space,
That fair, and seemly, your hand may be read,
Keep even your letters, at foot and at head;
With distance alike, between letter and letter,
One out of others shows much the better.

The poetical appearance of the writing-master is thus announced by Mr. Massey*, his biographer,—

As the moon in a clear night shines very conspicuous among the stars, so Mr. Ayres commands our particular attention in the hemisphere of English penmen. Yet his first appearance was but small, and his rising scarcely noticed.

The praises which have been bestowed on writing-masters by their admiring pupils show how competent they were to practise that part of their master's art which we should now call exaggeration. For example, one man is told that his skill in writing disguised the most wretched literary compositions:—

No sweeter force the orator bestows,
When from his lips the graceful period flows,
Than words receive when by thy matchless art
Charming the eye they slide into the heart,
When double strength attracts both ear and sight,
And any lines prove pleasing when you write.

The charms of calligraphy must indeed have been great to have inspired such verses as the following;

How justly bold in SNELL's improving hand
The pen at once joins freedom with command!
With softness strong, with ornaments not vain,
Loose with proportion, and with neatness plain;
Not swelled, not full, complete in every part,
And artful most, when not affecting art.

The following lines were addressed to a rival of Snell, who, unlike that great master, cultivated a very ornate style;—

Thy tender strokes, inimitably fine,
Crown with perfection every flowing line;
And to each grand performance add a grace,
As curling hair adorns a beauteous face;
In every page new fancies give delight,
And sporting round the margin charm the sight.

Cowley, in the dedication of his *Book of Copies* to Robert, Earl of Sussex, says that "after long gazing at this beauteous art, he at last fell enamoured with it, and striving to be thought her worthy favourite he endeavoured to work by the samplers of those who came nearest to her perfection."

The celebrated Cocker, who wrote the *Arithmetic* which gave rise to the phrase "according to Cocker," was the hero of his neighbourhood;

To you, you rare commander of the quill,
Whose wit and worth, deep learning, and high skill,
Speak you the honour of great Tower Hill.

According to Massey the abilities of Cocker were not quite first-rate. "His writing, I allow, is far inferior"

* In 1763, Mr. Massey, a writing-master, published *The Origin and Progress of Letters*, in which he introduces "a new species of Biography never attempted before in English, viz., the lives of English Penmen or Writing-Masters." From this work many of the details of this article are gleaned, but it is meagre and unsatisfactory, so that the History of Calligraphy has yet to be written. The treatises on the art published by its professors from the reign of Elizabeth downwards, are very numerous. One of the best of its kind is that of "Maister David Browne, his Majesty's scribe," published in 12mo., at St. Andrews, in 1623. He has also another work on the art of teaching to write, published in 1638. The names of John Davies of Hereford, Rich., author of the *Pen's Dexterity*, Gething and Bales, are celebrated. Mr. Nichols mentions that curious collector, John Bagford, has assembled in the British Museum several portfolios of fragments of their various works, and of copy-books, many in all probability now unique. These are preserved among the Harleian MSS., but we may add, that by referring to the Catalogue of Printed Books we have found several volumes of tracts on writing, which contain many beautiful specimens of the writing of the Masters mentioned in this article, and sometimes their portraits.

to what we have from the hands of some of our late masters; and there is not that freedom and liveliness in his pencilled knots and flourishes that there is in pieces done by a bold command of hand.

But Cocker fabricated as well as received verses, as we find by an old volume in the British Museum library, published in 1664, and entitled "*Daniel's Copy-Book*, or a Compendium of the most usual Hands of England, Netherland, France, Spain, and Italy, with the Hebrew, Samaritan, Chaldean, Syrian, Egyptian, Arabian, Greek, Saxon, Gothic, Croatian, Slavonian, Muscovian, Armenian, Roman, Florentine, Venetian, Saracen, Ethiopian, and Indian Characters; with all the Hands now most in mode, and present use in Christendom, written with a singular dexterity, and after a more easie, ready, free, and gentle way, than hitherto hath been ever practised or known in this Kingdom. Together with sundry Portraitsures of Men, Beasts, and Birds, in their various Forms and Proportions, naturally drawn with single touches, without former Precedents. All very useful for Ingenious Gentlemen, Scholars, Merchants, Travellers, and all sorts of Penmen." To this book is prefixed a royal patent for the sole printing of it for the space of fourteen years.

The specimens of English writing given in this volume are certainly very ingenious, but remarkable more for oddness and eccentricity than utility; the figures of animals expressed in flourishes of the pen, have probably never been surpassed, but with all their skill they produce a very ugly effect. However, such as they are, they elicited from Mr. Cocker the following acrostic.

On my much Honoured Friend, who makes his Pen
Equally wondrous with his Namesake's Den.

AN ACROSTIC.

Rare soul, when I survey Thy ample parts,
I fancy Spheres in Spheres, Virtues and Arts
Circling in a celestial motion, where
His wonders who created all appear!
All the choice blessings God confers on men,
Reside in thee: thy all-transcending pen
Demonstrates this, since in the Lyon's Den
DANIEL, miraculously lodg'd, thy name
A greater subject never was for fame;
No mortal ever did, nor ever can,
In nobler works, pleasure and profit man;
Earth's best returns too small, Thou slight'st renown,
Let Him who gave thee all, give thee a crown.

EDWARD COCKER.

No sooner had writing-masters conceived the idea, that their art was entitled to rank as one of the fine arts, than their admiration of it became, if possible, more unbounded. They spoke of their "schools of writing," in the same sense that we refer to "schools of painting" or "sculpture." They considered that a natural genius was necessary to the art, for on being informed that one Billingsley had learned to write without a master, Massey remarks: "This is no more than what has been observed in many excellent performers in other arts and sciences, whose skill and reputation have been principally owing to their natural genius and unweary industry." Another man is said to have had a "fertile genius for the designing knots, and flourished pencilled pieces." Another is referred to as "one of our British worthies who took great pains to improve that useful branch of learning, true and natural writing." We read also of large sums of money having been paid for specimens of the writing of the "great masters," and as much eagerness shown by amateurs of writing, for the possession of a page written by Snell or Ayres, as by connoisseurs for a painting by Claude or Murillo. We also read of the funeral of a writing-master, the pall being supported by his brethren of the quill, and his epitaph written by one of them as follows:—

Princes by birth, and politics, bear sway,
But here lies one of more command than they:

For they by steady councils rule a land,
But this is he, could men, birds, beasts, command,
Even by the gentle motion of his hand.
Then Penmen weep, your mighty loss deplore,
Since the great SEDDOX can command no more.

In Massey's volume, before referred to, are recorded not only the praises, but also the quarrels and disputes of rival pen-nibbers. If the quarrels of these "British worthies" strike us as amusing, the language in which they are recorded is no less so. "Snell was one of our first English penmen who practised the art of writing in an absolute, free, bold, and neat manner on the revival of the useful elegance of the quill. Yet there were jealous heart-burnings, if not bickerings between him and Coll Ayres, another of our great reformers in the writing common-weal, both eminent men in their way, yet like our most celebrated poets, Pope and Addison, or to carry the comparison still higher, like Cæsar and Pompey, one could bear no superior, and the other no equal." Such rivals as these had their solemn trials, accompanied by public defiances, proclamations, and decisions by umpires. The prize was usually a golden pen. There is a trial recorded in the reign of Queen Anne between Mr. German and Mr. More. German having courteously insisted that More should set the copy, he wrote thus:—

As more, and MORE, our understanding clears,
So more and more our ignorance appears.

The combatants in this trial displayed such an equality of skill, that the umpires refused to decide, till one of them noticed that Mr. German had omitted the tittle of an i!

The history of the contest between Peter Bales and David Johnson is amusing. Bales had acquired great skill in micography, or writing in miniature. One of his performances in this way is thus recorded by Hollingshead.

The 10th of August 1575, a rare piece of work, and almost incredible, was brought to pass by an Englishman, born in the city of London, named Peter Bales, who by his industry and practice of his pen, contrived to write, within the compass of a silver penny, in Latin, the Lord's Prayer; the Creed; the Ten Commandments; a Prayer to God; a Prayer for the Queen; his poesy; his name; the day of the month; the year of our Lord; and the Queen's reign. And on the 17th of August next following, at Hampton Court, he presented the same to the Queen's Majesty, in the head of a ring of gold, covered with a crystal, and presented therewith an excellent spectacle by him devised for the easier reading thereof, wherewith Her Majesty read all that was written therein with great admiration, and commended the same to the lords of the council, and the ambassadors, and did wear the same many times upon her finger.

David Johnson had proffered a challenge "To any one who should take exceptions to this my writing and teaching." He longed for an encounter with Bales, but Bales was silent during a whole year, until he found that he was "doing much less in writing and teaching," since this public challenge was proclaimed. He then set up his counter-challenge, which was immediately accepted. It was addressed "To all Englishmen and strangers." It was to write for a golden pen of the value of twenty pounds in all kinds of hands, "best, straightest, and fastest," and most kinds of ways, "a full, a mean, a small with line, and without line, in a slow set hand, a mean facile hand, and a fast running hand," and further "to write truest and speediest, most secretary and clerk-like, from a man's mouth, reading, or pronouncing, either English or Latin."

In answer to this challenge, Johnson accused Bales of arrogance; he declared that such an absolute challenge was never witnessed by man; and a few days afterwards meeting Bales, he showed him a piece of writing in a fine secretary's hand, which he had very much laboured to produce, and said, "Mr. Bales, give me one shilling out of your purse, and if within six months you better, or equal, this piece of writing, I will give you forty pounds for it." But the day of the trial was

at hand. On Michaelmas day, 1595, it was held before five judges. The appellant and the respondent had their appointed places, and an ancient gentleman was entrusted with the golden pen. In the first trial for the manner of teaching scholars, the award was in favour of Bales, as was the second, likewise, for secretary and clerk-like writing, dictated in English and in Latin; Johnson himself confessing that he wanted the Latin tongue, and was no clerk. In the third and last trial for fair writing in sundry kinds of hands, Johnson prevailed on account of the beauty, proportion, and superior variety of the Roman hand. In the court hand, in set text, and bastard secretary, Bales exceeded him. Bales then presented his master-piece, composed of secretary and Roman hand four ways varied. This silenced the challenger, but, in consideration of his youth, and lest he might be disgraced to the world, the judges gave their decision in private. Bales remonstrated in vain. The prize was awarded to him, but the fame accompanying it was not so widely spread as it otherwise would have been.

The defeated challenger now went about reporting that he had won the pen, but that the defendant had obtained it by "plots and shifts, and other base and cunning practices." Bales vindicated his claim, and offered to show the world his master-piece which had won it. Johnson put out "an appeal to all impartial Penmen," in which he impugned the veracity of the judges, and found much fault with the manner in which the trial was conducted; he expected it to have been before penmen, and not before a multitude like a stage-play, and shouts and tumults with which he had hitherto been unacquainted. He charges Bales with having possessed himself of the golden pen by a trick, which he states thus:—Before judgment was awarded, alleging the sickness of his wife to be extreme, he desired she might have a sight of the golden pen to comfort her. The ancient gentleman who was the holder, taking the defendant's word, allowed the golden pen to be carried to the sick wife; and Bales immediately pawned it, and afterwards sold it at a great loss, so that when the judges afterwards met to award the prize, the pen was not to be had, and being ashamed lest the affair should get public, they gave such a verdict as suited the occasion.

Bales, in a rejoinder, publishes to the universe the day and hour when the judges brought the golden pen to his house, and in order to check the insolence of his opponent, and to show himself no recreant, he assumes the golden pen for his sign.

There is a singular phrase connected with the art of writing, which occurs in many of the modern languages, viz., *to write like an angel*.

According to Mr. D'Israeli, this phrase originated with one ANGELO Vergicio, a Greek emigrant in France, whose beautiful hand-writing excited the admiration of the learned in the time of Francis I. The French monarch had a Greek fount cast, modelled by the writing of Angelo, whose name became so much identified with beautiful writing, as to give birth to the familiar phrase, *to write like an angel*.

A late writing-master of the name of Tomkins, in common with others of his craft, imagined that it was one of the fine arts, and that a writing-master was entitled to a seat in the Royal Academy, at least among the class of engravers. He attempted to get an invitation, as an artist, to the annual dinner of the Academy, but the members persisted in considering him as a writing-master, and he was excluded. "Many a year passed, every intrigue was practised, every remonstrance was urged, every stratagem of courtesy was tried; but never failing to deplore the failure of his hopes, it preyed on his spirits, and the luckless caligrapher went down to his grave—without dining at the Academy!" He bequeathed to the British Museum his copy of Macklin's Bible, profusely

embellished with the most beautiful and varied decorations of his pen. Sir Joshua Reynolds painted his portrait, an engraved copy of which is inserted at the beginning of the Bible just referred to; and Chantry sculptured his bust, which he also bequeathed to the British Museum, and indeed, without which they were not to receive the Bible. Mr. D'Israeli relates that when Tomkins applied to have his bust, our great sculptor abated the usual price, and, courteously kind to the feelings of the man, said that he considered Tomkins as an artist! It was the proudest day of the life of our writing-master!

INFINITE toil would not enable you to sweep away a mist; but by ascending a little, you may often look over it altogether. So it is with our moral improvement: we wrestle fiercely with a vicious habit, which could have no hold upon us if we ascended into a higher moral atmosphere.—*Essays written in Intervals of Business.*

A young miller in Holland, having a taste for painting, exercised it at his leisure hours in portraying the few objects within his limited circle: the mill, his master's cattle, and the pastures, were all that presented themselves to his confined view; but these he varied so accurately by light and shade, as the effect of the clouds changed them, as fully to compensate for the want of variety: yet his labours were not appreciated, and when he had finished one picture he bartered it away to the colourman, in exchange for materials to paint another. It so happened that a master of a tavern, who expected company at his house, wished to ornament the bare walls of his apartment, and purchased one of these paintings for a crown, which probably would have still remained unnoticed on his wall, had not chance sent an artist of judgment to his tavern, who had no sooner entered the room where the picture was hanging, than he discovered the merit of the young rustic painter, and immediately offered the innkeeper a hundred florins for what had cost him a Dutch crown; and paying down the money, desired the landlord to procure him all the paintings he could obtain from the young miller at the same price, which circumstance soon brought him into repute, and enabled him to follow the bent of his inclination, and delight the connoisseurs of paintings, by the faithful touches of his pencil.—*Flora Historica.*

SPRING.

THE season now hath cast away
Its garb of cold, and wind and sleet,
And decks itself in broidery
Of sunshine bright and flow'rets sweet;
And bird and beast doth each essay
In its own fashion to repeat—
The season now hath cast away
Its garb of cold, and wind, and sleet.
Fountain, and brook, and rivulet,
In silver-spangled livery play,
Sparkling, their holiday to greet:
All things are clad in new array,
Because the season casts away
Its garb of cold, and wind, and sleet.

OLD TROUBADOUR.

In very truth, all the several attributes of the Deity are nothing else but so many partial and inadequate conceptions of one and the same simple perfect Being, taken in as it were by piecemeal, by reason of the imperfection of our human understandings, which could not fully conceive it altogether at once; and therefore are they really all but one thing, though they have the appearance of multiplicity to us. As the one simple light of the sun, diversely refracted and reflected from a roid cloud, hath to us the appearance of the variegated colours of the rainbow.—CUDWORTH.

JUST Heaven, man's fortitude to prove,
Permits through life at large to rove
The tribes of hell-born woe;
Yet the same Power that wisely sends
Life's fiercest ills, indulgent lends
Religion's golden shield to break the embattled foe.

WARTON.

JOHN W. PARKER, PUBLISHER, WEST STRAND, LONDON.